(a) the number and details of the special trains being run between Trivendrum and Bangalore during this summer;

(b) whether the traffic in the above route justifies running of an additional daily train; and

(c) if so, the action Government proposed to take?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A total no. of 192 special trains (trips) are planned for summer between Bangalore and Trivendrum/Ernakulam as against 142 specials (trips) run during last summer. Of the 192 specials, 55 specials have been run during April, 2007.

(b) and (c) It has been decided to increase the frequency of 6315/6316 Kochuveli-Bangalore Express from weekly to tri-weekly during 2007-2008.

Revamping catering system

4107. SHRI K. E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to revamp the whole catering system of Indian Railways to improve the quality of food served;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that many of the long distance trains taking more than 24 hours to reach the destination have no pantry cars at present;

(d) if so, the details of such trains; and

(e) whether Government are considering a proposal to add pantry cars in such trains and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) As an ongoing process, catering services of Indian Railways receive constant attention of the zonal railways and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), which is a wholly owned company of Indian Railways formed to upgrade and professionalise the catering and hospitality services of Indian Railways IRCTC is in the process of setting up of Multi-Cuisine Food Plaza, Automatic Vending Machines,

Water Vending Machine, Cell kitchens etc. to serve quality food and beverages in Railway premises and on trains. Regular monitoring of catering services is being done by Zonal Railways and IRCTC. IRCTC is also engaging independent food audit agencies to streamline and upgrade such services. All good practices of catering business are being adopted to render quality catering services on Railways.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir, There are about 93 long distance Mail Express/ Superfast trains running without pantry car whose journey time is more than 24 hours each way and having 10 sleeper including AC sleeper coaches.

(e) Pantry car services on long distance trains are being introduced in a phased manner subject to availability of new pantry car.

Development of Buxar and Dumraon stations

†4108. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Government's plan for development of Buxar and Dumraon railway stations in Bihar;

(b) whether any memorandum was submitted to Minister of State for Railways during his recent inspection done at Buxar railway station;

(c) if so, the details of departmental action taken to fulfil the demands mentioned in the said memorandum, point-wise; and

(d) the details of the amenities to be further provided to Buxar railway station after upgrading it to 'A' level model station and by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU: (a) Work relating to improvement of station building by shifting the passenger reservation system/booking office, extension of platform no. 1, 2 and 3 for 24 coaches and provision of Train Indication Board, Electronic Display Board, Coach Guidance Board and Tower Clock has been sanctioned for Buxar railway station. At Dumraon station the work relating to construction of new Foot Over bridge is in completion stage and extension of platform for 24 coaches has been completed recently.

(b) No memorandum signed by Hon'ble M.P. was received.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.